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Letter from [John Muir] to [Annie] Wanda [Muir], 1896 Jul 5 .

John Muir

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C13

Hot Springs. S.D. July 5th 1896

Mammoth Springs
Yellowstone Park

Helena
Montana

My dear Wanda. I am now fairly on my way west again & a thousand miles nearer you than I was a few days ago. We got here this morning after a long ride from Chicago. By we I mean Professors Sargent, Brewer & Hague & General Abbott — all interesting wise men & grand Company. It was dreadfully hot the day we left Chicago but it rained before morning of the 4th & so that day was dustless & cool & the ride across Iowa was delightful That State is very fertile & beautiful The cornfields & wheat fields are

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02118

C23

Hot Springs. S.D. _____ 189_

boundless or appear so as we skim through them on the cars. & all are rich & bountiful looking flowers in bloom line the roads & tall grasses & bushes The surface of the ground is rolling with hills beyond hills many of them crowned with trees I never before knew that Iowa is so beautiful & inexhaustibly rich.

Nebraska is monotonously level like a green grassy sea - no hills or mountains in sight for hundreds of miles ben two are cornfields without end & full of promise this year after three years of famine from drouth. South Dakota is dry & desert like until you get into the Black Hills, that

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is by the way we came. The Black Hills get their name from the dark color they have in the distance from the pine forests that cover them. The pine of these woods is the Ponderosa or Yellow pine, the same as the one that grows in the Sierra, Oregon, Washington, Nevada Utah Colorado Montana Idaho Wyoming & all the West in General. No other pine in the world has so wide a range or is so hardy at all heights & under all circumstances & conditions of climate & soil. This is near its ~~the~~ Eastern limit & here it is interesting to find that many plants of the Atlantic & Pacific slopes meet & grow well together. Today is hot but the pine hotel is cool. Sargent & Ben Abbot & I took a walk in the woods before lunch. Here are a few flowers I gathered. We are going to deadwood tomorrow & thence up the highest of the Black Hills or Mountains rather & thence to the Rocky Mountains. I hope you are all well. I feel finely well now I am moving homeward. Love to all

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